

Statement of Michael M. Kaiser
President, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
Before the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings
and Emergency Management
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Good morning, my name is Michael Kaiser and I have the honor of serving as the President of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. I am grateful for the tremendous support of this subcommittee over my six and a half years in this position.

Indeed, the Kennedy Center has received several authorizations through your subcommittee since 1995. Over the last 12 years, the institution has made enormous progress in making necessary capital repairs to the entire memorial and improvements in its operations and maintenance. Our current authorization bill (Public Law 108-410) expires on September 30, 2007, and the Center is asking for the subcommittee's consideration of a proposed five-year re-authorization spanning fiscal years 2008-2012. I will describe the Center's plan for this time span shortly. For the benefit of all subcommittee members, I would like to take a minute to describe briefly the breadth of the Center's activities and outreach across the country and around the world.

The Kennedy Center is both our national cultural center and a living memorial to President John F. Kennedy. I emphasize the word "living" since there is a vitality to the memorial and the institution that far exceeds anything that could have been envisioned when the Center was chartered by Congress in 1958 under President Dwight D. Eisenhower as the national cultural center.

Each year, the Kennedy Center reaches over two million people with more than 2,000 performances in all performing arts disciplines. Every season, our focus is on developing programming that achieves national and international acclaim as is befitting our role as the national cultural center. But our performing arts activities are not limited to the Washington D.C. area. We are committed to touring productions to all 50 states to make them available to all Americans.

The National Symphony Orchestra, a vital part of the Kennedy Center for 20 years, is fulfilling this mandate by expanding its national touring activities. The Kennedy Center Theater for Young Audiences on Tour program brings the best of family and children's theater to 107 cities in 31 states and serves over a quarter million people.

The Center is committed to making arts accessible to everyone and presents free performances every day of the year on its Millennium Stage. These performances are also available free to every American via live Internet broadcasts.

The Kennedy Center is also committed to arts education and has created one of the most extensive arts education programs in the world spending \$125 million over five years on this effort and serving 11 million people nationwide. We now train 25,000 teachers annually to bring the arts into the classroom at all levels. Our distance learning initiative, which touches more than one million teachers and students, enables classrooms to experience world-class performances and to engage in discussions with artists at the Kennedy Center. Our Partners in Education Program mentors relationships between arts organizations and their community school systems with 105 organization teams in school systems in 46 states, including the District of Columbia.

The Kennedy Center also provides training to talented young Americans who aspire to careers in dance, music, conducting and set design. Our American College Theater Festival identifies the next generation of actors, designers and playwrights with 20,000 students from over 900 colleges participating. The Kennedy Center has instituted two programs which we hope will change the landscape of the arts in America: The Institute for Arts Management, which prepares arts managers for jobs running major institutions throughout the world, and the Capacity Building Program for Culturally Specific Arts Organizations, which trains managers of African-American, Latino, Asian-American and Native American arts organizations. We have also instituted international arts management programs in Mexico, China, Pakistan and the 22 Arab nations.

The extensive programming and education activities that the Center presents and provides are supported through private contributions of almost \$50 million annually, not counting other government grants or endowment earnings, which total an additional \$20 million each year. In addition, the Center earns approximately \$65 million each year from ticket sales, parking fees, food service, space rental and our gift shops.

In support of our artistic and educational programming, the Center takes seriously its responsibility to keep the building, a Federal asset, in the best condition possible. The Kennedy Center building consists of 1.5 million square feet of usable floor space, on 17 acres of land. The building contains nine theaters, two public restaurant facilities, nine special event rooms, five public galleries, halls, and foyers, and approximately 50,000 square feet of administrative offices. Let me assure you that the Kennedy Center will continue to operate a safe, secure and well-maintained building for all of its patrons and visitors and provide preventative maintenance as well as routine and emergency repairs and replacement of building systems.

To this end the Center, a Presidential memorial, received a federal appropriation of approximately \$30 million this year. The direct federal funding provided to the Kennedy Center is used for both the Operations and Maintenance and for Capital Repair and Restoration of the presidential monument. Direct federal funding may not be used for programming expenses.

The Operations and Maintenance account is for the maintenance, repair, and security of the entire facility and grounds. This includes utilities, fire-protection and sprinkler systems, elevators and handicapped lift systems, and a myriad of electrical,

mechanical, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, plumbing, and sanitary water systems. In addition to the maintenance and operation of these systems, this account also funds small renovations, and the administration of 20,000 feet of off-site warehouse space. The security department provides 24-hour protection every day of the year, emergency response, key and access control, alarm system monitoring, dignitary protection and crowd management. In addition to these personnel services, the department maintains a variety of security and safety systems such as electronic security, vehicular barriers and fire alarm and fire suppression systems.

The Center is always looking for opportunities to make the memorial more energy efficient. One example of our progress is the completion of an Energy Savings Performance Contract, which has resulted in substantial energy savings.

We believe this re-authorization proposal will accommodate anticipated cost escalation as well as critical minor repair projects and increases relating to employee salaries and benefits, utilities and contracted services including security, housekeeping and ground services, and equipment maintenance.

The Center's Capital Repair and Restoration account addresses the larger renovations to the infrastructure of the memorial. During the past nine years, much has been accomplished.

In 1997, the Center re-opened its renovated state-of-the-art, fully accessible Concert Hall. In 2003, the Opera House was also completely renovated to address fire and life safety issues and accessibility. In 2006, we opened our new Family Theater that offers a completely modern, accessible venue for youth and family productions. And, currently, the Eisenhower Theater is undergoing its first full renovation since it opened in 1971, with improvements to life safety, building systems and accessibility.

The Grand Foyer has received a complete overhaul. The Center has installed a new fire alarm management system and public address system for the entire building. Rehabilitation and modernization of the Center's elevators is in process with ten completed to-date. The Center conducted a comprehensive survey to identify all asbestos-containing materials in the building and has implemented an on-going inspection and maintenance program including substantial abatement activity.

The entire roof and roof terrace were replaced and new safety railings were installed. Likewise, the marble deck on the plaza level was removed and replaced with new granite decking.

Perhaps our largest capital improvement has been to the site and grounds. The new circulation provides free flow traffic movement to the garage, additional garage entrances and exits, and direct access to Potomac Expressway from the Kennedy Center site. Pedestrian access was improved by replacing the steep ramp with a monumental stairway and a fully accessible walkway. The site was also completely re-landscaped and new lighting of the building and the grounds was installed.

To heighten security, an electronic security system, including closed circuit cameras, has been installed throughout the building and grounds, vehicular bollards were installed at the entrance to the service tunnel, the entire key and access control system was upgraded and a new security operations center was installed.

To prepare for this re-authorization proposal, the Center completed a full update of its Comprehensive Building Plan with the latest information on the facility's condition and need for improvement. A team of architectural and engineering consultants surveyed the entire building and recommended upgrades based on the current needs and conditions, provided cost estimates, and organized the improvements into a new implementation plan.

This plan reflects the Center's continued priorities of accessibility and life safety, as well as facility infrastructure. The completion of life safety efforts identified in previous plans, such as installation of sprinklers on the Roof Terrace level and the renovation of the Eisenhower Theater, take precedence in the near future. Over the authorization period, the Center's capital repair implementation plan includes:

Installation of sprinkler systems and replacement of fire doors on the Roof Terrace level, as well as minor architectural upgrades, such as carpet replacement, wall and ceiling finishes, and new lighting,

Renovation of miscellaneous toilet rooms throughout the building to address accessibility issues and to update fixtures and finishes,

Improvements to exit stairwells including upgrades to stair treads, handrails, lighting, signage, ventilation, finishes, and doors, and upgrades to door hardware, such as handles and openers, to meet accessibility requirements.

In the longer term, as the life safety and accessibility work throughout the facility is completed, the focus will shift to facility infrastructure improvements. These projects will include:

Replacement of the Curtain Walls, which involves replacing all of the large floor-to-ceiling windows and gaskets in the Grand Foyer, Roof Terrace, Hall of States, and Hall of Nations.

Repairs to the exterior marble where panels have become broken or discolored and joints have deteriorated.

Renovations to areas in the south block underneath the Concert Hall, which were not addressed during the larger Concert Hall renovation. In addition, this project will address some environmental issues in instrument storage locations, on the stage, and in the upper levels of the auditorium. This work will provide the environment required for a major national orchestra and associated priceless instruments.

Significant work on aging mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. The Center's building systems primarily include original equipment, and although maintained and serviced regularly to ensure proper function, those elements not previously replaced in theater renovation projects are reaching the end of normative service life and are showing signs of failure and deterioration. This re-authorization proposal will allow the Center to embark on a systematic rehabilitation campaign. Mechanical system upgrades will include repair, refurbishment, or replacement of heating and cooling equipment such as boilers, air-handling units, humidifiers, pumps, valves, and piping. Plumbing systems will also receive major upgrades. The electrical systems will receive a complete overhaul, including replacement of aging electrical wiring, panels, and devices. The emergency power transfer switches will be replaced, and safety and protective devices will be tested and upgraded as necessary. Upgrades also will be made to technical stage systems, including various cyclical replacements, audiovisual systems, and rigging components. These projects, though not obvious to the public, are critical to the continued safe and efficient operation of the memorial.

Two additional projects affecting public spaces will be initiated towards the end of this five-year period – the renovation of the Theater Lab and the Terrace Theater. The Theater Lab, a flexible black box theater space, will be renovated to create permanent walls, address sound transmission problems, and upgrade finishes and building infrastructure.

The Terrace Theater, over 30 years old, will receive improvements in accessibility, seating, finishes, patron circulation and building and theatrical system infrastructure. Accessible seating is currently only available in the rear of the theater. While this is not in violation of accessibility laws, it does not conform with our standards of service to people with disabilities; it would be ideal to provide additional dispersed seating. I should note that project design will start during this five year period, but the bulk of the expense, including construction expense, will fall in 2013, and a subsequent authorization.

These projects, to be completed over the next five years, and many other long-range projects in planning constitute an aggressive plan in order to keep the Center operating in a way befitting a Presidential memorial.

Let me finish by expressing gratitude for this opportunity to update you on the many activities of the Kennedy Center. I thank the subcommittee for its continued support of the Center and it is my hope that your subcommittee and Congress will receive this proposal favorably. I am pleased to answer any questions. Thank you very much.